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**EDITORIAL**

# While the Marcos regime blasts at China, the US flexes in the Philippines

Over the past few days, several pro-US politicians and officials of the US-Marcos regime have ganged up against Chinese embassy officials in the Philippines, accusing them of being "unwelcome guests" and of "interference." While this drew public attention, the US military and naval forces have been quietly flourishing in the country, continuously strengthening their military presence on land and sea around the Philippines.

A heated war of words erupted after Cmdr. Jay Tarriela, spokesperson of the Philippine Coast Guard-West Philippine Sea (PCG-WPS), spread mocking images that ridiculed China's leader, contrary to standards of mutual respect among nations. This provoked a strong reaction from Chinese officials, who used strong language to demand disciplinary action against the PCG official.

Tarriela's actions were calculated to provoke China. He did this a day before the "bilateral consultation," a dialogue initiated by China in Xiamen City. His role has always been to fan the flames of antagonism against China since he was appointed as spokesperson of PCG-WPS in 2023, following his training in Washington.

He was supported by several senators led by Sen. Risa Hontiveros. She gathered 15 senators to sign a resolution condemning China, along with discussions among some senators to declare the Chinese embassy official "persona non grata." They seemed to be burning the bridge of diplomacy.

Hontiveros is known to be an Amboy and instigator of anti-China sentiments. She is seeking US support for her 2028 ambitions. She and the Senate are hypocrites in claiming "defense of sovereignty" in their condemnation of China. In contrast, the Senate did not react to the signing last January 15 of the Philippines-Japan Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement. In 2024, it ratified the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA). Both agreements blatantly undermine the country's independence, allowing the Japanese military to move freely in and out of the country, as part of its role as a US partner in the "first island chain" strategy to encircle China.

The Senate has never collectively stood up against the increasing number of US military bases in the Philippines under EDCA, or against the secret US facilities in Palawan, Ilocos, Aurora, Cagayan, and other places, or against the US

deployment of long-range missiles and other war matériel in secret locations in the country. It has been silent on the entry and sailing of US warships in the country's territorial waters and their passage between Philippine island straits, and on the mooring of giant US naval vessels in the country's exclusive economic zone.

It has also not opposed the US's continuous preparation for war and deployment of increasing numbers of military equipment and troops in the Philippines. It has not spoken out against the US plan to "sell" the EDCA sites in the Philippines to Taiwan, or the plan to turn the Davao Gulf into a "refueling hub" to service US naval forces. The Senate has also kept quiet on the plan to build an ammunitions factory in Subic, which forms part of the US plan to use the country as a base for its war operations in Asia.

While some politicians and officials of Marcos are making anti-China statements, the US quietly established a new Army Rotational Force-Philippines, under its Task Force Philippines. Together with the AFP and military forces of its allied countries, naval maneuvers will again be conducted within the country's exclusive economic zone.

While anti-China tirades have intensified in the Philippines in favor of the US, criticism of US imperialism has grown stronger around the world. This came after the US invaded Venezuela and kidnapped its president, Nicolas Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores. This was followed by the declaration to seize Greenland, threats to Mexico, Colombia, and Panama, stirring up trouble and threatening to invade Iran, and increased pressure on countries that are friends or trade oil with Cuba.

These actions have exposed the hypocrisy of the US's claim of promoting an "international rules-based order." The fascist madman Trump made it clear that "America First" or US interests are the true driving force behind this, as he seeks to gain control over oil resources and raw materials around the world. To avoid being bound by international law, the US has undermined the United Nations by withdrawing from its commissions and refusing to pay its dues. Trump established the Board of Peace, to replace the supposedly useless UN, to give the US and Israel international legitimacy for their actions in the Gaza Strip.

The US has been condemned by various countries, even by its closest imperialist allies. These actions have also been criticized by the American people, along with widespread protests against the fascist Trump regime, including cases of state-sponsored murder and the imprisonment of tens of thousands of immigrants. Trump also faces widespread outrage due to his ties to Jeffrey Epstein, who was convicted of crimes related to the abuse of women and children.

In the Philippines, the global criticism of the US is being deliberately downplayed by US-friendly media, along with an orchestrated attack against China. China is being portrayed as a "threat" to Philippine sovereignty, to justify the repeated lies that the Philippines needs US help to defend itself. The real threat to the Philippines is the growing possibility of US military aggression in Asia, with Japan, Australia, and other powerful allies. This will drag Filipinos into an international conflict that run contrary to the people's interests.

It is imperative that the people now fight for genuine national sovereignty. The patriotic mass movement must be strengthened to fight for the dismantling of US military bases, the expulsion of all foreign imperialist troops, and the end of US military intervention in the country. AB

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# Trump revives imperialist and interventionist Monroe Doctrine

Donald Trump released the imperialist US' National Security Strategy in December 2025. The National Defense Strategy followed release on January 26. Both documents focused on the so-called "Trump corollary," extending the Monroe Doctrine that propelled US domination over the Western Hemisphere.

The US first implemented the "Monroe Doctrine" in 1823 to deny Latin America from then-colonialist European powers, appropriating the region as its own backyard, and its resources and advantages as its private domain.

Intensified US military intervention in Latin America has revived the doctrine two centuries later. Like the earlier "Roosevelt Corollary" (1904), Trump aggressively brandishes US military superiority to repress and subjugate weaker countries and allies in Latin America, North America, and Europe.

**Doctrine of imperialist intervention and aggression**

The "Trump corollary" encapsulates US imperialism's current attacks, aggression, and coercion in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere in the world.

US forces raided Venezuela on January 3 and abducted its president, Nicolas Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, in an attempt to force the sovereign Chavista government to its knees and seize the country's oil resources. On January 29, Trump declared a "national emergency" over Cuba and ordered additional tariffs against countries supplying it with oil. At the same time, he threatened similar brutal sanctions against Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, and other countries trading with Russia and China.

Even before taking office back in 2024, Trump threatened to invade Panama unless it "returns" control of the Panama Canal to the US. He flooded the country with American troops under the guise of war games. This forced Panama's Supreme Court in January to issue an order expelling Chinese companies from the canal and selling the facilities to BlackRock, the largest US financial firm.

That same January, Trump threatened eight NATO member countries with up to 25% tariffs on their exports if they continued opposing the US plan to "buy" Greenland from Denmark. The US plans to turn the entire island into a military base and preposition various missiles there for US defense (dubbed the Golden Dome) against "attacks from China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran." Trump withdrew after European countries threatened retaliation and higher tariffs on American products. These countries also took steps to expand trade relations with China.

Beyond the Western Hemisphere, Trump's genocidal wars and war provocations continue in Palestine, the autonomous Rojava region in Syria, Iran, Russia, and others. In Asia, he brandishes US military power through massive war games and expanding presence in the region. Using the Philippines as launchpad, US naval operations in the South China Sea run nonstop to provoke and challenge China.

**The illusion of a "rules-based international order" collapses**

Trump has totally discarded the pretense that a so-called "rules-based international order" exists and that the US upholds it. In a meeting of capitalist country leaders on January 20, US allies declared that such an order is "dead."

Veiled under the "America First" slogan, he signed an order on January 6 to withdraw the US from 66 international organizations and treaties, including 31 United Nations (UN) agencies. The US finalized its withdrawal from the World Health Organization on January 22. The US stopped funding these institutions, resulting in mass office closures and pushing the UN to the brink of collapse. Trump established a "Board of Peace," which primarily mandated itself to making Gaza a direct colony of the US and Israel.

Trump also wields "America First" inside the US against the supposed "mass migration" of "criminals" and "illegal aliens." This justifies his fascist campaign of forcibly detaining and expelling migrants, immigrants, and even US citizens, from the country. The consequent severe unrest and violence is being met by the American people's growing unity and resistance. AB

# Nationwide anti-fascism strike held across 50 US states

Americans launched a nationwide strike on January 30 to protest the intensifying and brazen fascism of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents. The protest was called "National Shutdown: No Work. No School. No Shopping. Stop Funding ICE."

The 300 protest actions and strikes were held across 50 states, led by more than 1,000 organizations. Filipino groups such as Anakbayan, Malaya, League of Filipino Students, Defend Migrants Alliance, and Migrante USA participated in organizing the actions. The protest highlighted the walk out of thousands of high school and college students from various cities. Several thousand businesses temporarily closed and supported the strike.

The strike erupted amid growing state violence in Minnesota. Operation Metro Surge deployed around 3,000 Department of Homeland Security agents to hunt down immigrants and terrorize residents. The violence peaked when an ICE agent murdered writer Renee Good on January 7. Agents of the CBP followed with the killing of nurse Alex Pretti on January 24. Aside from the two, ICE agents killed US citizen Keith Porter and Mexican immigrant Silverio Villegas González.

Minnesota residents first launched a general strike on January 23. Up to 50,000 people joined the protest, and more than 700 businesses shut down that same day. About 80,000 Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation workers participated in the action.

Since Trump took office, more than 30 people have died while detained in ICE facilities, mostly from criminal neglect of detainees' health. AB

## Imperialist attack on Rojava condemned

THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) regional committee in Europe strongly condemned the intensifying attacks against the people of Rojava that began in the last weeks of January. ILPS described the ongoing offensive as "a severe and escalating campaign of violence, displacement, and collective punishment" that shows utter disregard for civilian life and basic human dignity. It warned of a looming large-scale massacre of the Kurdish people.

The ILPS Europe statement emphasized that the Rojava attacks in January serve the political and military objectives of the powerful states in the region and their imperialist master. The group linked the offensive to the broader US–Zionist–Turkish strategy aimed at dominating West Asia.

ILPS Europe sharply denounced European governments for colluding with the offensive through their funding and support for the regime and the armed groups involved in the attacks and massacres against the Kurdish people.

## National-democratic groups support Venezuela and Palestine

NATIONAL-DEMOOCRATIC GROUPS marched to the US embassy in Manila on February 6 to mark the International Day of Action for Venezuela and Palestine. The protest demanded accountability from the imperialist US for its aggression against Venezuela and for the genocide it and Zionist Israel are committing in Palestine. They carried the call: "US, Number One Terrorist!" and "Stop the US War Machine!"

Meanwhile, progressive student groups in Panay protested on February 4 to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of the Filipino-American War in 1899. They condemned the continuing US intervention in the Philippines through lopsided treaties and the persistent presence of US military forces in the country.

# IN SHORT

## 7 years

since state agents shot NDFP peace negotiations consultant **Randy Malayao** while he was sleeping in a bus on January 30, 2019. The film "Bloom Where You are Planted" highlights his life and struggle, along with the stories of the newly freed Amanda Echanis and activist Agnes Mesina.

## 124 years

since the **Union Obrero Democratica** was founded at Cine Variadades, Sampaloc, Manila, on February 2, 1902. It was the first labor center that fought for wages, workers' rights, and Philippine independence from US colonial rule.

## FEBRUARY 23

is the date set by the ICC to hear the confirmation of cases against Rodrigo Duterte after the court ruled that he is "fit to stand trial." The first hearing was scheduled for September 23, 2025, but was delayed by the Duterte camp's delaying tactics.

## 7 OF THE BIGGEST TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

control 30%–35% of the US stock market; they plan to wager $600 billion on artificial intelligence (AI).

## $40 billion in revenue

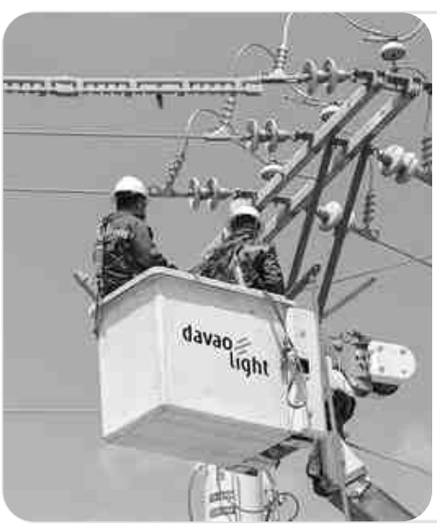
was earned from business process outsourcing (BPO) in 2025. Despite this, workers in the sector continue to suffer from low wages, job insecurity, and lack of labor protection.

## 11 years

passed before the Talents Association of GMA (TAG) won its regularization case against GMA Network Inc. The Supreme Court recognized GMA Network's talents as regular employees of the company, entitling them to job security and benefits.

## 3,800 CHILDREN

including 20 infants, were detained by US ICE under the Trump regime's fascist anti-migrant and anti-immigrant campaign. Some children died because of ICE's neglect of their medical condition.




## ₱2/KWH

was added by Davao Light to its electricity rates, raising prices from ₱9.7135/kWh to ₱11.7187/kWh last January. The additional charge further burdens Davaoeños.

Social Media Registration Proposal

# Surveillance and suppression of right to expression

On January 21, the Department of Information and Communication Technology pushed a draft policy requiring Filipinos to register before opening an account on any social media platform. The proposed law would require users to provide their real names and other personal data to enable them to use their own accounts. Parental verification would be mandatory for users aged 18 and below.

Platforms would also be obliged to institute strict identity verification, including facial image capture of users. This allegedly aims to combat online crimes such as scams, identity theft, and child sexual abuse and exploitation. The same policy is already being implemented in the European Union and is being pushed across Southeast Asia. Senator Panfilo Lacson first proposed a similar policy in July 2025.

According to the groups Agham and the Computer Professionals' Union, the DICT raised legitimate issues but the policy flagrantly violates social media users' privacy. The agency shifts the burden of addressing online crimes onto ordinary Filipinos instead of holding the corporations that own social media platforms accountable. It normalizes surveillance and the collection of individuals' private information.

This measure clearly aligns with the US-Marcos regime's intensifying surveillance, censorship, and suppression of press freedom and the people's right to expression. It is no different from failed laws such as the SIM Registration Law and the Cybercrime Prevention Act, which handed over people's sensitive data to repressive state agencies and private corporations. These laws failed to curb online crimes, which have persisted and even worsened.

**Weaponizing social media for fascism**

Social media comments expressing the people's anger against the US-Marcos regime's corruption and fascism sharply increased in December 2025 and January this year. Outrage and frustration prompted many to declare the justness of the armed struggle led by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. Comments coincidentally surged with the Party's anniversary, when statements, photos, and videos of the celebration circulated online. Most comments voiced discontent with the rotten system and a desire for revolution to change the country's corrupt order.

Aiming to suppress this upsurge, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) threatened those who spoke out accusing them of "inciting anti-government rebellion." The NTF-Elcac dismissed the grievances as "propaganda" and falsely portrayed them as the Party's "massive social media campaign." Fearing the growing public disenchantment toward the Marcos regime, the agency and AFP launched an online "troll offensive" using PR firms and paid trolls. The NTF-Elcac mobilized tens of thousands of AFP soldiers to flood social media with ridicule and mockery against anyone critical of the regime, particularly those condemning military abuses. They also openly flooded reports of human rights violations with fake news, manipulating public opinion through censorship of the media.

**Within NAP-UPD framework**

The online troll campaign, intensified surveillance, and targeting of state critics are framed under the National Action Plan for Unity, Peace, and Development (NAP-

*Continue to page 7*

## Filipino migrants demand investigation of US and Taiwan ghost projects

FILIPINO MIGRANTS ARE demanding an investigation into the various ghost or fake projects of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in the US and Taiwan.

According to the DMW, it allots ₱5 million every year for migrant shelters or temporary housing which it co-manages with non-governmental organizations in Taiwan. But Filipino-American missionary and Bahay Ugnayan shelter operator Father Joy Tajonera said they have not received any subsidy from the Manila Economic and Cultural Office since 2022.

The priest also uncovered that the agency allotted ₱2.9 million for a currently closed "MWO shelter" in Taipei.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-USA Washington condemned the DFA ghost project that is the supposed Philippine Consulate in Washington DC. Despite the allocated funds of ₱83.73 million for 2025 and ₱88.9 million for 2026, the consulate remains non-existent for Filipinos in the US and its funds unaccounted. The group also questioned where the ₱9.8 billion DFA Assistance to Nationals funds for 2025 are going. The agency provides almost no services to Filipinos in need, especially those detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

*From page 6*

UPD). With its Strategic Communication component, NTF-Elcac seeks to control information channels, block recruitment, and combat revolutionary movement "propaganda" inside and outside the country through disinformation, psychological warfare, and Red-tagging. The agency spreads the notion that all criticism of corruption and repression is the revolutionary movement's propaganda, while branding anti-corruption youth protests as "terror grooming," to justify attacks on democratic rights to free expression and organizing.

If approved, forced social media registration will not only increase the state's gathering of private information and opinions but will further systematize large-scale state surveillance. Like its predecessors, the law will certainly fail to stop online crime. Like the forced SIM card registration, it will take away access of millions of Filipinos to vital communication services and deprive them of a voice. The state will gain greater ease in controlling opinion and news, and targeting its critics. **AB**

## Anti-corruption protest set on February 25

KILUSANG BAYAN KONTRA Kurakot (KBKK, or People's Anti-Corruption Movement) announced on January 19 its relaunching of the large-scale anti-corruption protest on February 25, with the marking of the 40th EDSA People Power uprising anniversary. The group led 100,000 people in anti-corruption protests on September 21, 2025 and 20,000 on November 30, 2025 in Luneta Park, Manila.

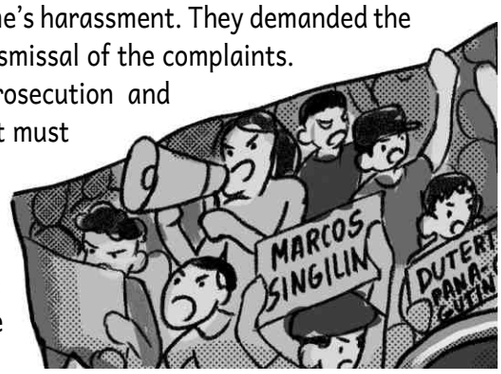
KBKK's announcement said it will march with different sectors and groups that actively participated in the country's anti-corruption movement. These include Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), youth-student groups and councils that led the big walkouts in the latter part of 2025, workers and urban poor, women, teachers, health workers, the elderly, and others.

They said that despite sustained protests from groups and the public on the Marcos regime, only a few have been held accountable and not a single corrupt "big fish" or bigwig has been jailed. They also denounced the regime for railroading the 2026 national budget enactment, which remains packed with pork barrel and other insertions. They also said their protest is primarily based on the congressional committee's junking of the impeachment complaint against Marcos.

**Supression and repression.** KBKK also condemned the Marcos regime for supressing and repressing those who oppose corruption. The Philippine National Police (PNP) filed complaints at the Department of Justice (DOJ) against no less than 72 individuals for sedition and inciting to sedition in relation to the Anti-Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012.

Those the PNP charged at the DOJ include Bayan president Renato Reyes Jr, and student leaders from student councils, publications and progressive groups, namely Tiffany Faith Brillante, Joaquin Buenaflor, Jacob Baluyot, and Aldrin Kitsune. They were targeted for their participation in the "Baha sa Luneta" (Luneta Flood) protest on September 21, 2025 and for their social media posts expressing firm anti-corruption stands.

Progressive groups protested the PNP and the Marcos regime's harassment. They demanded the immediate dismissal of the complaints. They said prosecution and imprisonment must target crooks in government, not those who oppose corruption.



# Martyred Negros military cadre lauded for revolutionary contribution

The Negros revolutionary movement recognized and honored Reynaldo Erecre (Ka Amek) in February for his valuable contribution to advancing the revolution in Negros and Central Visayas. Fascist 94th IB troopers willfully killed Erecre after capturing him on January 30 in Sitio Apitong, Barangay Bi-ao, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental.

The New People's Army (NPA)-South Central Negros (Romeo Nanta Command) reported that Erecre was in no position to fight when AFP soldiers captured him. They deliberately killed him using excessive force, mutilating his face beyond recognition.

Erecre served as the Party's Regional Committee secretary in Negros when he was martyred. He came from the lower petty bourgeoisie ranks and grew up in Maco, Davao de Oro. He worked in a plywood factory when he stopped studying for a Bachelor of Science in Education degree.

He joined the NPA full-time in 1996. He became front committee member after three years of service. He became an NPA partisan unit member in Cebu and Bohol. He also led the daring raid on the PNP headquarters in Bohol in June 1999 where they seized more than 80 firearms. He was appointed to the Central Visayas Regional Committee's Executive Committee in 2004.

Erecre transferred work to Negros island in 2006 and served as front commander and deputy Party secretary in Southeast Negros. From 2019, Ka Amek became Negros island's NPA regional commander (Apolinario Gatmaitan Command) and Party's Regional Committee Secretariat member. He was Party secretary in the island from 2023, actively leading and advancing the Party's rectification movement.

Meanwhile, Joem Golez also died in the encounter. He was a medical staff of the NPA regional command. He came from the poor peasant class and resided in Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla. Golez joined the people's army in 2016. AB

## NPA-Northern Samar armed actions

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Northern Samar (Rodante Urtal Command) reported some of its units' armed actions against the 19th IB in December 2025. No less than three 19th IB soldiers were killed, with others wounded in action.

An NPA unit ambushed 19th IB troopers on December 15, 2025 in Barangay Poponton, Las Navas. Earlier, the NPA-Northern Samar foiled the 19th IB's raid on the Red army camp in Barangay Gusaran, Silvino Lobos on December 10, 2025. One Red fighter died in the raid.

Meanwhile, it also reported active defense against a 37-strong 19th IB unit that tried to attack the NPA encampment on July 22, 2025 in Barangay L. Empon, Las Navas. No less than four 19th IB troopers died while the NPA unit had no casualties.

**Distribute land in Hacienda Luisita now!** More than 150 farmers and farmworkers from Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac protested at the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City on January 26 to condemn the long-delayed land distribution and to oppose fascism, militarization and bourgeois comprador's land grabbing in the hacienda.

**Benguet indigenous people oppose mining.** Indigenous people and residents of two barangays in Itogon, Benguet protested anew on January 27 to oppose the expansion of operations of Sangilo Mines, owned by Itogon-Suyoc Resources, Inc. They held the action in connection with the DENR's "public scoping" in Barangay Tuding.

**Resistance to Cebu market privatization continues.** Carbonhanong Alliance of market vendors protested on February 5 to continue resisting the market's privatization. They demanded the removal of Megawide Construction Inc from the market's construction because it will certainly raise stall rents.

**Sugarcane workers rally in Passi City.** Hundreds of sugarcane farmworkers, small millers, and members of various associations of sugarcane farmers collectively protested in Passi City, Iloilo on January 22. They denounced the continued drop in sugar farmgate prices which, they said, stems from the surge of imports into the country and the inutility of the Sugar Regulatory Administration.

**Urban poor oppose displacement by UP SDG Park.** Urban poor community residents inside UP Diliman marched along University Avenue on February 5 to oppose the construction of the Sustainable Development Goals Wellness Park over their homes and farms. Student council representatives from various UP campuses, who were holding their annual assembly, joined them.

# Impeachment complaint against Marcos swiftly junked

Pres. Ferdinand Marcos Jr's allies in Congress swiftly junked the filed impeachment complaint to oust him from Malacañang. They referred it to the House Committee on Justice on February 4 which, by a 39-7 vote, declared the case against the president "insufficient in substance."

The complaint's junking did not surprise the Makabayan bloc. They said this proves the government system's rottenness, where Congress defends the interests of thieves and the corrupt. The basis of betrayal of public trust was sufficient for the seven who voted in favor of trying the president.

Congress will next discuss the two impeachment complaints against Vice Pres. Sara Duterte that were submitted on February 2. Makabayan bloc also endorsed one of them.

Progressive groups gathered outside Congress during the deliberation of both complaints to support their representatives who filed one of them. Having both the president and vice president face impeachment complaints to oust them from office is the first time in the country's history. They declared: "Marcos, Duterte, both corrupt, impeach both!" AB

## Students launch campus mass protests

STUDENTS OPENED THE second semester this January-February with protests and activities in no less than 11 universities. Hundreds gathered to continue struggling for their democratic rights, hold the Marcos regime accountable for massive corruption, and resist repression.

Protests broke out in 10 University of the Philippines (UP) System campuses, highlighted by the march of more than 550 UP Los Baños students in Laguna on January 19.

Protests were also held in Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Technological University of the Philippines-Manila, Far Eastern University, University of Santo Tomas, De La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, National Teachers' College, Saint Louis University in Baguio City, Cavite State University, and University of San Carlos in Cebu City.

**Stand against TOFI.** Opposition to tuition and other fee increase (TOFI) proposals in private universities marked the protests. Universities cite rising costs of education, facility improvements, and higher salaries for teachers and staff. Related to this, the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) launched a 5-point demand against TOFI.

Meanwhile, NUSP lauded University of the East and DLSU students following the two university administrations' recent announcement that they will not implement TOFI in the 2026-2027 academic year. This victory came as a result of petitions, dialogues, protests, and united actions of students, student councils, and progressive groups.

**PLDT supervisors fight for CBA.** PLDT Inc Supervisors launched successive actions this January to demand a substantial collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for 2026-2028 between the Gabay ng Unyon sa Telekomunikasyon ng mga Superbisor sa PLDT (GUTS-PLDT) and PLDT Inc management. GUTS representatives and PLDT management started negotiations for the new CBA on November 28, 2025 but 16 negotiation sessions reached no meaningful agreement.

**25-year illegal dismissal issue at Toyota**. Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation Workers' Association picketed the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) office in Intramuros, Manila on January 26. They demanded that the agency resolve the 25-year issue of illegal dismissal and the continuing denial of the right to collective bargaining. In 2001, Toyota illegally dismissed more than 230 union-member workers following the union's demand for CBA negotiations and the workers' strike.

**NLRC Region 3's slow action denounced.** National Federation of Labor Unions-Kilusang Mayo Uno members picketed at the National Labor Relations Commission Region 3 in San Fernando, Pampanga on January 21. They condemned the agency for its past anti-worker decisions and for its snail-paced action on other cases filed by workers.

**Demand for wage hike in Calabarzon.** Southern Tagalog workers protested at the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board IV-A office in Calamba, Laguna on January 26. They pressed their demand for a nationwide family living wage increase. They condemned the agency for granting measly wage hikes in the past.

# All-out resistance against foreign mining in Nueva Vizcaya

Seven residents of Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya were arrested on January 23 at their barricade against the planned mining of British company Woggle Corporation in their barangay. Using 400 police with support from Bureau of Fire Protection personnel, the company forcibly brought in drilling equipment (ground-boring machines), backhoe, and other machinery.

The order to dismantle the barricade and arrest of the residents came from the January 19 decision of the Regional Trial Court 30 of Nueva Vizcaya. Hundreds of residents, their supporters, church people, and environmental group members blocked the road on the day of the dismantling itself.

Those arrested included Florentino Daynos, one of the leaders of Defend Dupax del Norte. He and six others were released on January 26 after the prosecutor junked the "resistance and disobedience against person in authority" case and the added "obstruction of justice" charge against them.

Apart from the courts and police, the 86th IB also threatened to crush the Dupax people's fight under the pretext of "guarding" against organizations Red-tagged for supporting the people's struggles.

**Barricade, protest, and solidarity**

Residents of Sitio Keon, Barangay Bitnong, Dupax del Norte barricaded on September 17, 2025 to defend their land, livelihood, and the succeeding generations' future. They blocked vehicles, machinery, and company personnel from entering the road leading to the exploration area.

Dupax residents gradually gained recognition for their valiant struggle against the foreign company. They won support from the Diocese of Bayombong, nearby schools, and even some local government officials. Environmental defenders, progressive groups, and congressmen visited the barricade. The barricade was featured in media and social media inside and outside the country.

Environmental and progressive groups led by Kalikasan protested on January 24 at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Quezon City to condemn its permission for Woggle's exploration despite the community's clear opposition. They protested again on January 28 at the FCF Mining's office in Makati City.

London Philippine Solidarity along with progressive migrant groups in London protested at the Metals Exploration PLC office, the company that owns Woggle. United Kingdom groups launched the "British Mining Out of the Philippines" campaign to demand the withdrawal of the mining operations of British companies ravaging and destroying the Philippines' natural resources and violating human rights.

**Destructive British mining in Nueva Vizcaya**

The struggle against foreign mining in Nueva Vizcaya is not new. Residents have actively resisted FCF Mining prior to the fight against Woggle. FCF runs the Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in Barangay Runruno, just 20 kilometers from Dupax del Norte. The Runruno mine that FCF started mining in 2005 was depleting, prompting its expansion to Dupax del Norte and also Abra. Fully owned by Metals Exploration PLC, FCF Mining owns 60% of Woggle. Metals Exploration directly owns the remaining 40%.

Runruno residents and environmental organizations have long demanded the closure of FCF Mining because its operations lie

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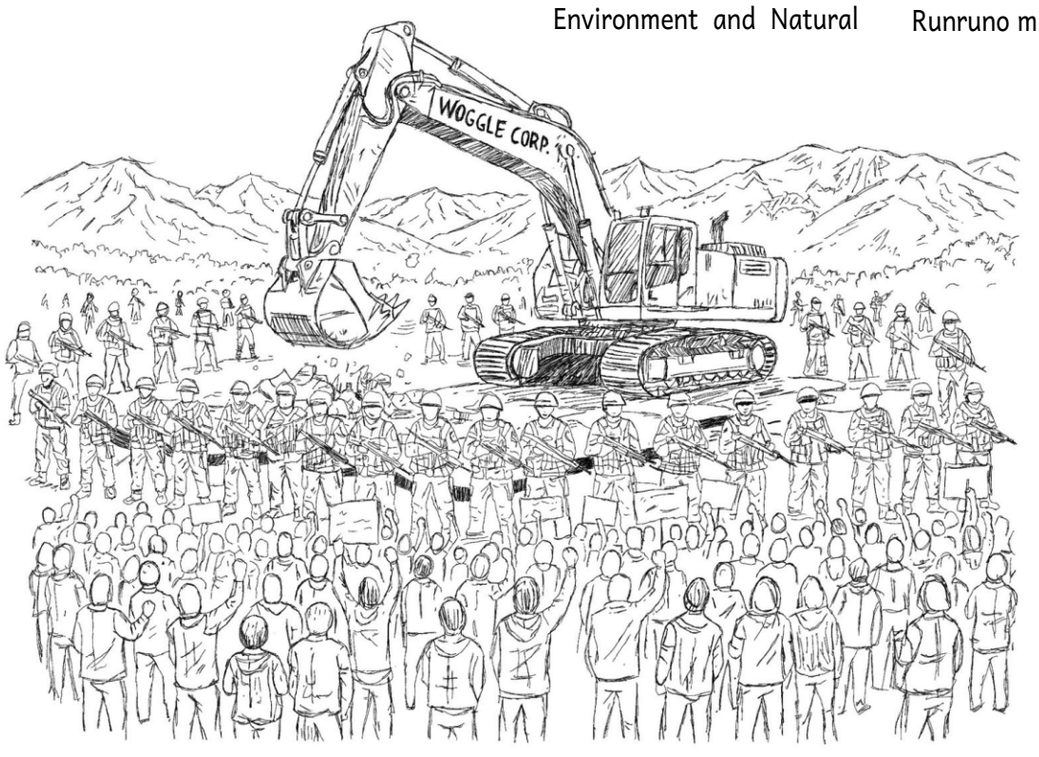

# "Terror financing" verdict on journalist, church worker a threat to press freedom

Local and overseas journalist groups, along with church people, academics and progressive groups, widely condemned the guilty verdict in the "terror financing" case against Frenchie Mae Cumpio and Marielle Domequil. The court sentenced the two on January 22 to up to 18 years imprisonment and a fine of ₱500,000 each.

Cumpio managed the independent media outlet Eastern Vista and contributed to Altermidya, while Domequil served as Rural Missionaries of the Philippines staff. Authorities arrested them, along with three others, on February 7, 2020. They collectively became known as Tacloban 5.

The verdict shocked many since the Court of Appeals declared in October 2025 that the state had no basis to seize money found on Cumpio. The court ruled the absence of legal or actual basis to claim the money linked to the Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army. Meanwhile, the court acquitted Cumpio and Domequil in the separate illegal possession of firearms and explosives case.

Journalists called the verdict on Cumpio and Domequil a "failure of justice" and a serious threat to the already miserable state of press freedom and freedom of expression in the Philippines. They condemned the state for weaponizing the anti-terror law to silence journalists and other dissenting voices. Apart from Cumpio and Domequil, no less than 35 other individuals faced "terror financing" charges since 2021.

International journalist organizations also expressed alarm at what they called the first verdict against a journalist in a "terror financing" case. No less than 14 foreign embassies in the Philippines called for the immediate release of Cumpio and Domequil.

Progressive organizations launched protests in Tacloban City and Metro Manila prior to and on the day of the verdict. Hundreds gathered at the Commission on Human Rights on January 22 to oppose the unjust verdict and demand the immediate release of Tacloban 5. AB

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inside or near the Magat Watershed—a protected area that irrigates more than 84,000 hectares of farmland in Cagayan Valley and supports 61,812 farmers and 360 irrigation associations. The petitions submitted by environmental groups stated that the Runruno mine dumps toxic waste and causes river pollution, flooding, and other environmental damage. The DENR nevertheless continues to reject demands to close the mine. It instead called the petitions "baseless" and used technical documents like the Environmental Compliance Certificate and Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program to drown the people's legitimate concerns.

According to a Metals Exploration PLC document, the company aims to enter Dupax del Norte to continue FCF Mining's ore processing operations in Barangay Runruno. It plans to take and process any potential ore mined from Dupax del Norte in Runruno, ensuring long-term and uninterrupted plunder of Nueva Vizcaya's natural resources, while its residents suffer environmental destruction, land grabbing, and the social ills that come with it.

Runruno symbolizes the state's peddling of Cagayan Valley's water source and food production to British capitalists. This strengthens the Novo Vizcayanon stand to fight the mine. They declare: "Ipamana, huwag ipamina!" ("Bequeath the land, stop mining it!")

Apart from Dupax, residents of Barangay Didipio, Kasibu have endured decades of similar hardship and violence in their fight against Australian- Canadian company OceanaGold. Its peasants and indigenous communities have long resisted destructive large-scale mining and foreign plunder that destroys ancestral land, rivers, and livelihoods. AB

## 47th IB deliberately kills 2 hors de combat in Negros Oriental

SPOUSES Pedro Gemodo, 61, and Juliana Arculo Gemodo, 63, both Red fighters, were already wounded when 47th IB soldiers accosted them in Sitio Agpapataw, Barangay Binobohan, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental on January 31. Instead of treating them as prisoners of war and providing first aid in respect of their rights, the soldiers deliberately killed the two.

The Gemados were wounded when soldiers of the 47th IB fired at their hut in Sitio Agpapataw. They maneuvered away from the scene of the incident but were eventually overtaken by the butchers.

The NPA-Central Negros (Leonardo Panaligan Command) honored the two for laying their lives for the Negrosanon masses.

# Economic zones for foreign business and exploitation expand

The US-Marcos regime declared two new economic zones (ecozones) through a proclamation on January 6. They will rise in Batangas and Iloilo, augmenting the 32 already opened by the regime since it took power. The regime targets opening 30 more ecozones this 2026, mainly in rural areas.

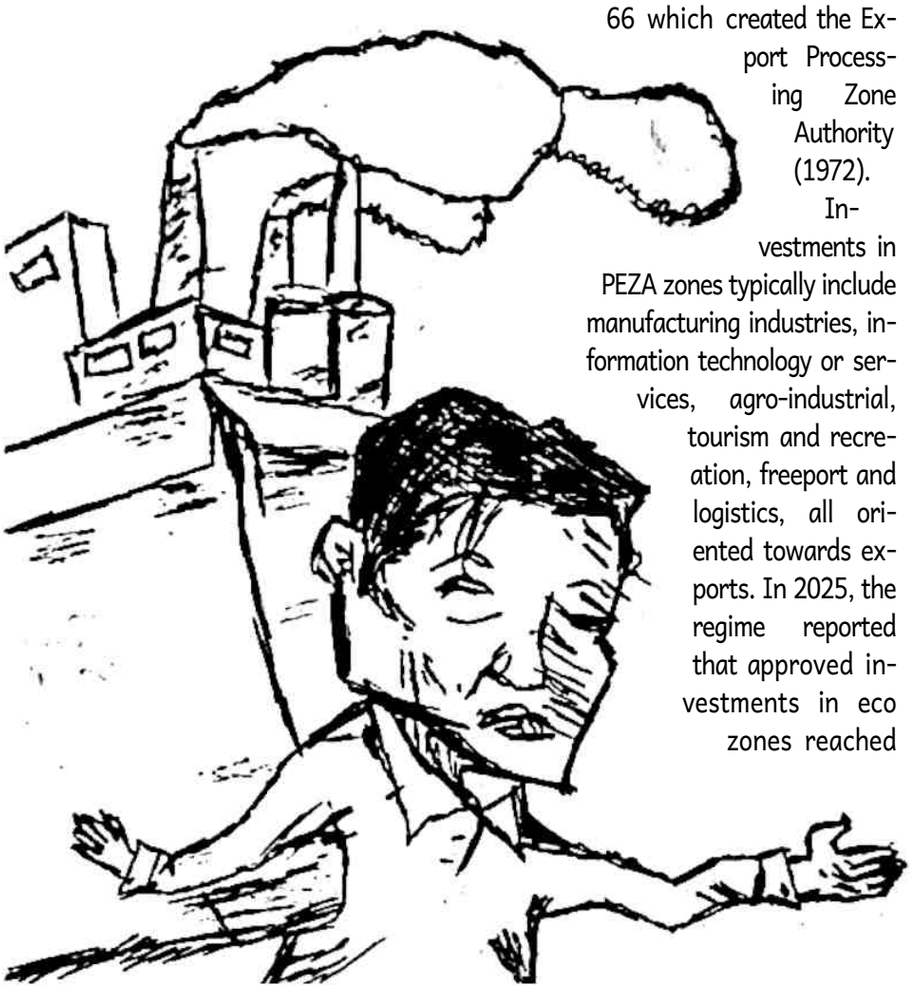
One new ecozone will rise in Tanauan City, Batangas. It extends the existing First Industrial Township-Special Economic Zone in Barangay Pagaspas and Trapiche. The total ecozone covers more than five hectares of land. Residents fear eviction of communities affected by the looming expansion.

In Iloilo City, another ecozone will rise in Barangay San Rafael, Mandurriao District, covering 3.8 hectares of land. It will serve as an IT Park, a center for business process outsourcing or BPO.

The new ecozones will serve as enclaves of cheap and docile Filipino labor. Here, wages and benefits are pegged at low levels, unions and strikes are strictly banned, and labor rights are rampantly abused. To further entice foreign companies, the regime grants them various incentives, including tax exemptions.

No less than 430 ecozones exist nationwide. These fall under the direct administration of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), an agency under the Department of Trade and Industry, established in 1995 through Republic Act (RA) No. 7916 or The Special Economic Zone Act of 1995.

Similar zones have been created long before PEZA by virtue of the US-Marcos I regime's RA No. 5490 or Foreign Trade Zone Authority (1969) and Presidential Decree No. 66 which created the Export Processing Zone Authority (1972).



Investments in PEZA zones typically include manufacturing industries, information technology or services, agro-industrial, tourism and recreation, freeport and logistics, all oriented towards exports. In 2025, the regime reported that approved investments in eco zones reached ₱260.89 billion, the highest since 2016. This nevertheless contributes only a small part to the country's total investments.

The Marcos regime targets attracting foreign investments worth ₱300 billion in 2026. Contrary to Marcos' claims, ecozones make no significant contribution to local production.

The working masses' daily wages remain low despite "growing investments." By the end of 2025, the minimum daily wage remained pegged at ₱695 in the National Capital Region, followed by ₱600 in Region IV-A and the lowest in BARMM at ₱411. The measly daily wages in the regions explain why PEZA prioritizes building new ecozones in the provinces.

**Anti-"forced leave" struggle inside ecozone**

In Freeport Area Bataan (FAB) in Mariveles, Bataan, the country's first ecozone, workers of FCF Manufacturing Corporation recently won an initial victory against the company's exploitative "forced leave" policy. After nearly a year of legal struggle, the labor court sided with the workers and declared the "forced leave" scheme illegal.

Workers filed a complaint in April 2025 at the National Labor Relations Commission in San Fernando City, Pampanga over four months of "forced leave." Companies usually impose this when the factory has "no production" following a period of high quota and rapid production. Workers said the company violated the provision of notification prior to "forced leave" and did not compensate those affected.

FCF produces luxury items like leather bags and wallets branded Coach and Kate Spade. FCF belongs to China-based company Fashion Focus Ltd. AB